ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Puns and Wordplay in English Quiz: Double Meanings Explained

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Explanations

1. The novel is full of ___, and even its title is a clever ___ words.
✔ **A) wordplay … play on**
Wordplay is uncountable, and one joke of this kind is a play on words. Play of words is a mistake from French, Spanish and Italian.

2. The bakery's new ___, printed under its name on every bag, is "Rise with us".
✔ **B) strapline**
A strapline (US tagline) is the short line under a company name. A punchline ends a joke, a headline tops a news story, and a byline names the writer.

3. "Sales at the ladder shop are really climbing," said the owner. The sentence has a ___: rising, or going up ladders.
✔ **B) double meaning**
A double meaning is two meanings in one sentence. A double act is two performers, a double take is a second, surprised look, and a double standard is an unfair rule.

4. The headline "Gardeners branch out" is a pun ___ the word branch.
✔ **D) on**
You make a pun on a word. The other prepositions are not used with pun.

5. Our plan for the new lift has had its ups and downs, ___.
✔ **A) no pun intended**
No pun intended is the fixed phrase, said after a pun, accidental or not. The other forms are not used.

6. Dad's joke about the dentist got a long ___ from the whole family.
✔ **B) groan**
A bad pun gets a groan, a low "ohhh". A quip, a pun and a malapropism are things you say, not reactions.

7. That joke about the chicken crossing the road is old and ___.
✔ **C) corny**
Corny means old, simple and heard too many times. Corned is only for meat (corned beef), and ambiguous and literal don't describe a tired joke.

8. The singers' matching white suits, fake tans and huge smiles were very ___.
✔ **D) cheesy**
Cheesy means cheap, too sweet or trying too hard. Witty is praise for clever words, not for suits, and ambiguous and literal don't fit.

9. Every Sunday my father tells the same harmless pun and waits proudly for us to groan: a classic ___.
✔ **A) dad joke**
A dad joke is a harmless, groan-worthy pun told with pride. A practical joke is a trick, a punchline is the end of a joke, and a double entendre has a rude second meaning.

10. Asked why he was late, the actor ___ that his alarm clock was "resting between jobs".
✔ **B) quipped**
Quip means make a quick, clever remark. Misspelt is about writing, and literalised and ambiguated are not standard English.

11. The comedy is only for adults: almost every line is a ___ with a second, rude meaning.
✔ **C) double entendre**
A double entendre has an innocent meaning and a rude one. A strapline is an advert line, and spoonerisms and malapropisms are slips.

12. Without giving a single fact, the article used ___ to suggest the coach had taken money.
✔ **D) innuendo**
Innuendo is hints that suggest something bad without saying it. Puns, quips and wordplay are for fun, not for hinting at wrongdoing.

13. The text "Let's meet next Friday" was ___: some friends thought it meant this Friday.
✔ **A) ambiguous**
Ambiguous means it can be understood in two ways. Ambitious means wanting success, ambivalent means having mixed feelings, and literal means word for word.

14. When I told my nephew to keep an eye on the soup, he ___ and stared at the pan.
✔ **C) took it literally**
Take something literally needs the adverb and an object. Literary means connected with books.

15. Saying "a tack of lime" for "a lack of time" is a ___; saying "Our new car has excellent fuel condemnation" for "consumption" is a ___.
✔ **C) spoonerism … malapropism**
A spoonerism swaps the first sounds of two words. A malapropism uses a wrong word that sounds like the right one.